

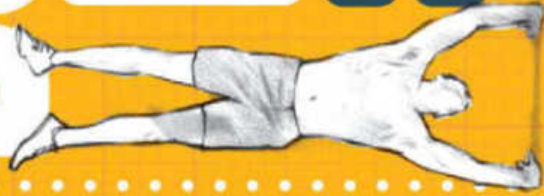
MensHealth

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

BODYWEIGHT MOVES

41 NEW GYM-FREE EXERCISES

FOR BUILDING **REAL** STRENGTH



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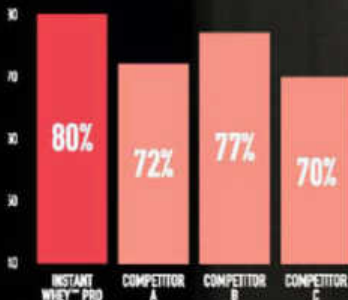
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PROTEIN CONTENT



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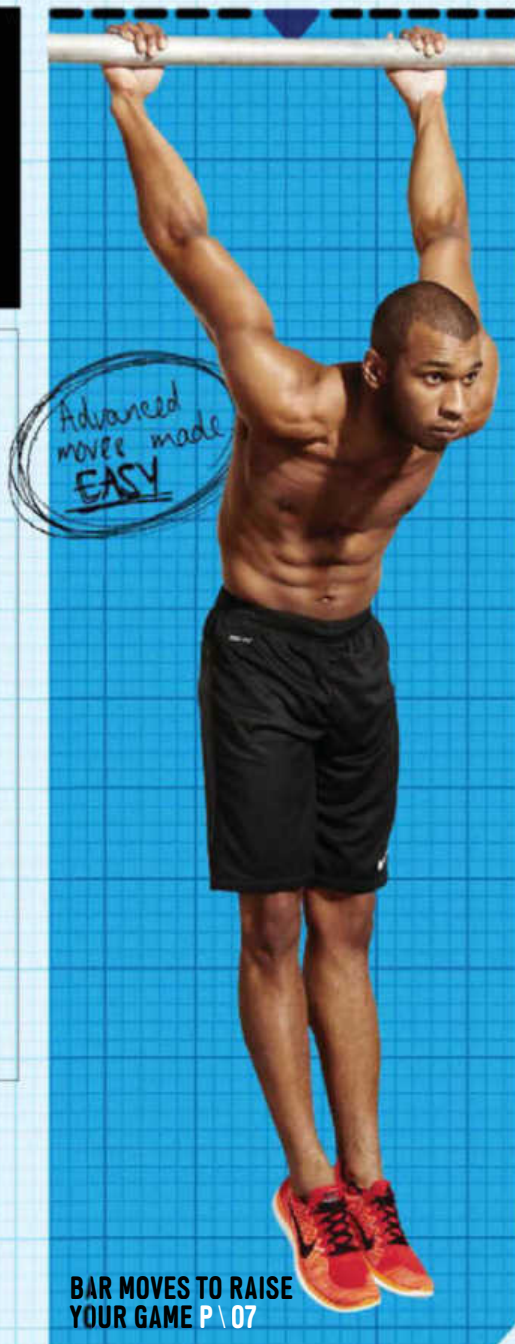
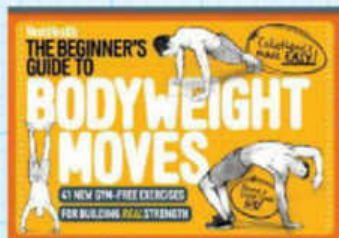
 [ReflexNutrition](https://www.instagram.com/ReflexNutrition)

MASTER YOUR BODYWEIGHT & ~~MAKE THE GYM~~ A PLAYGROUND

Calistenics was once something your mum did in the front room with Jane Fonda and Mad Lizzie. But bodyweight exercise is a very different beast in 2016. The best proponents are able to manipulate their bodies under, over and through bars with grace and strength, holding seemingly impossible positions with more than a little swag. From muscle-ups to tuck planches and multiple handstand press-ups, calistenics has become the coolest way to get in shape.

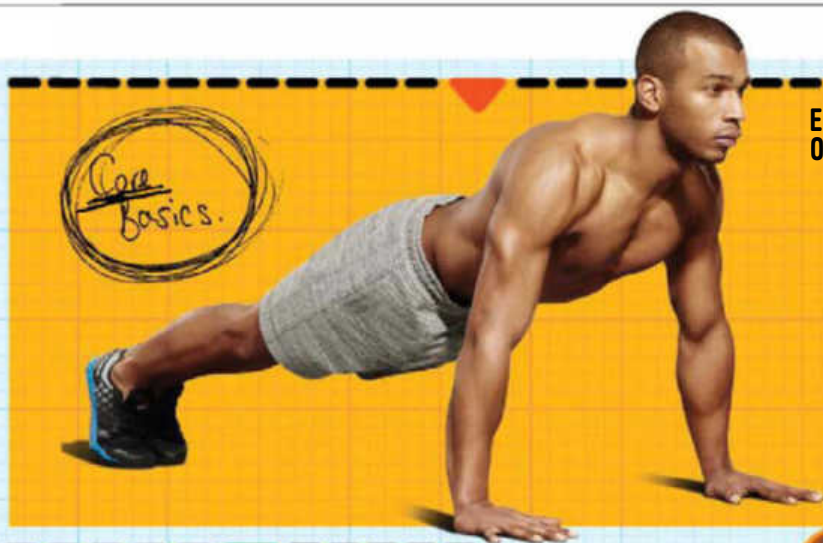
If a pull-up is beyond you (don't beat yourself up – done properly, they're *hard*) then this guide will teach you scaled movements to increase your strength and mobility gradually, so you can confidently work out whenever you have a bar to hang from or the space to stretch. Meanwhile, for those with decent bodyweight skills, our expert progression plans will escort you from accomplished to showboater. We even have training tips from former CrossFit Games champion Sam Briggs, should you require extra motivation.

Remember, your bodyweight is all you need to become a balanced, mobile, strong athlete. You just have to grab it with both hands.



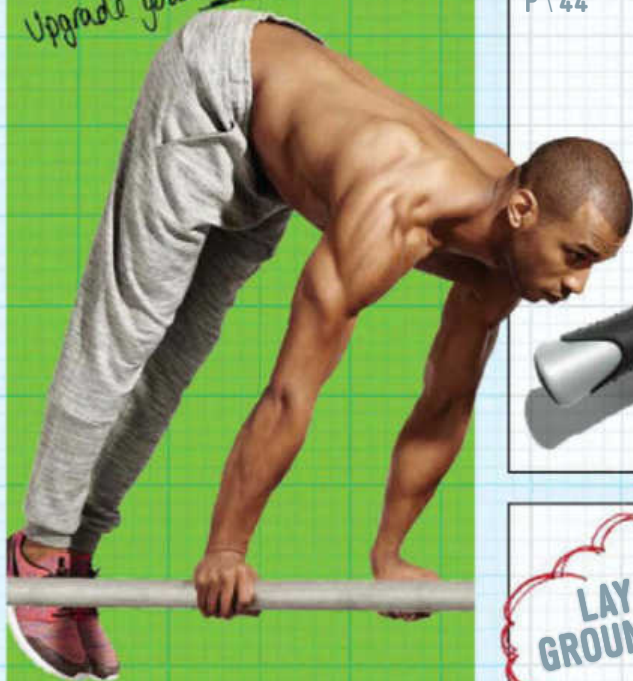


**EMPLOY YOUR
OWN CHASSIS**
P \ 19



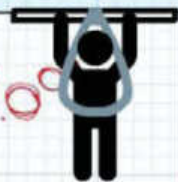
*Upgrade your **STRENGTH!***

**CALISTHENICS
TRAINING KIT**
P \ 44



**NEW WAYS TO BE A MASTER
OF THE PARALLETES** P \ 33

**LAY THE
GROUNDWORK**



**CROSSFIT
CHAMPION TIPS**
P \ 46



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BAR EXERCISES

THE BEST WAY TO MUSCLE UP BAR NONE

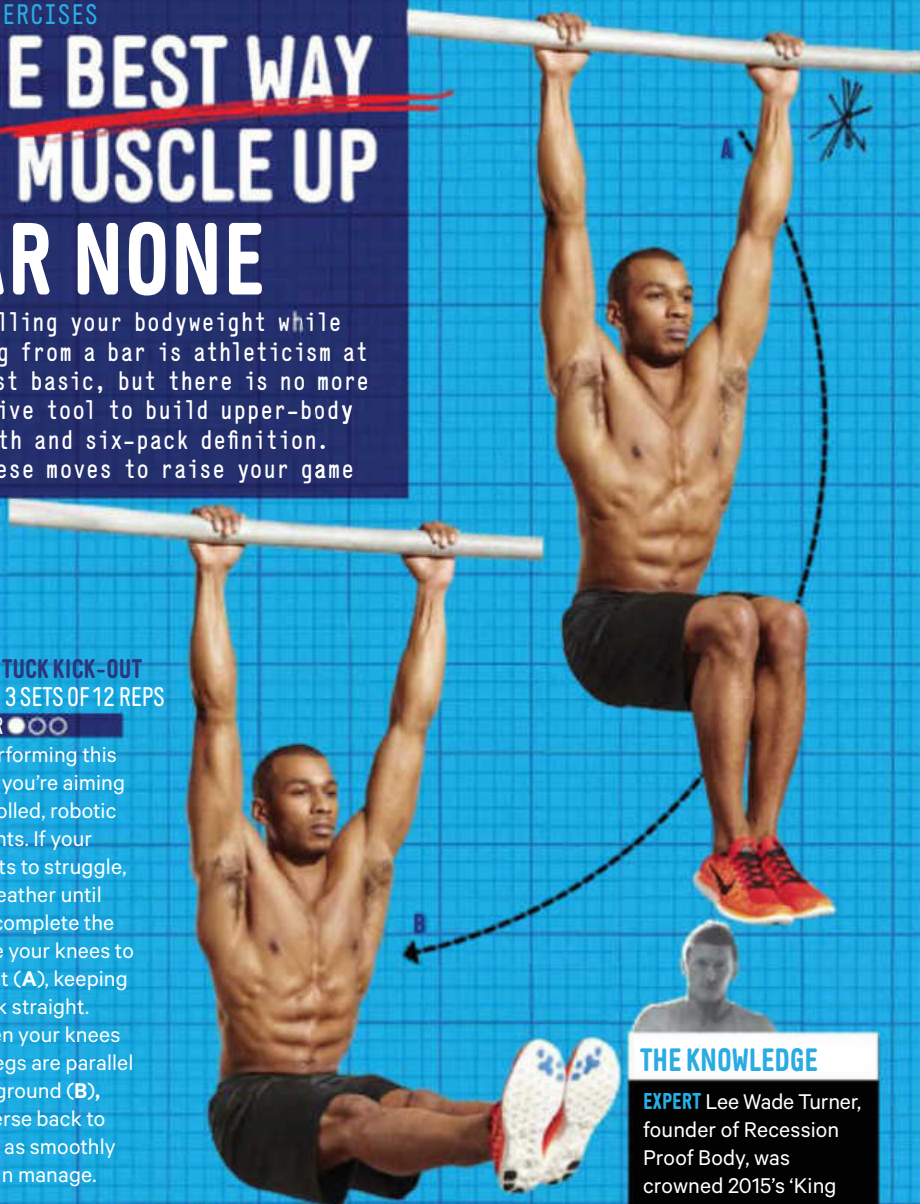
Controlling your bodyweight while hanging from a bar is athleticism at its most basic, but there is no more effective tool to build upper-body strength and six-pack definition. Use these moves to raise your game

01 TUCK KICK-OUT

3 SETS OF 12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

When performing this exercise, you're aiming for controlled, robotic movements. If your core starts to struggle, take a breather until you can complete the set. Raise your knees to hip height (A), keeping your back straight. Straighten your knees so your legs are parallel with the ground (B), then reverse back to the start, as smoothly as you can manage.



*Try **NOT** to swing!!!



THE KNOWLEDGE

EXPERT Lee Wade Turner, founder of Recession Proof Body, was crowned 2015's 'King of the Bar'. You're in safe (and strong) hands.

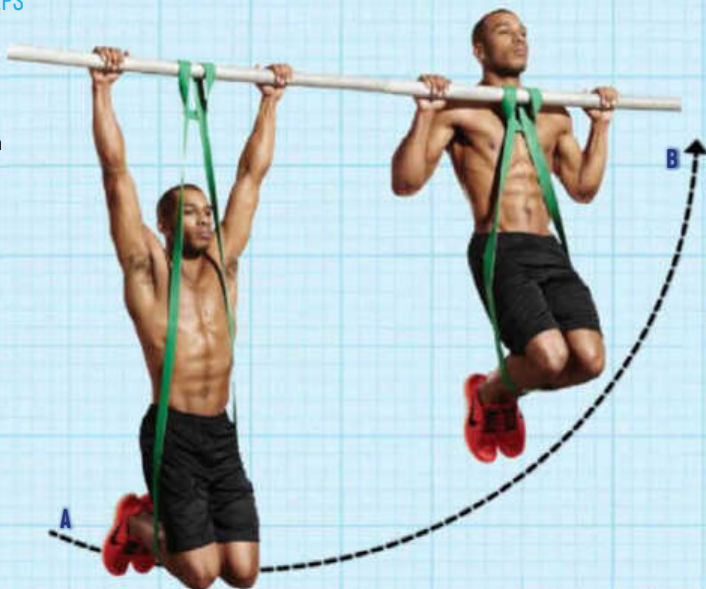
CONTACT recessionproofbody.com

02 ASSISTED PULL-UP

3 SETS OF 8 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

No matter how much you can bench, squat or deadlift, pull-ups ain't easy. Prepping with assisted reps will boost your technique ahead of going it alone. Fix a resistance band to the bar and put your knees through the loop. From a dead hang (A), pull your chin up and over the bar (B). A wide grip will better engage your lats for extra strength without the stabilisers.

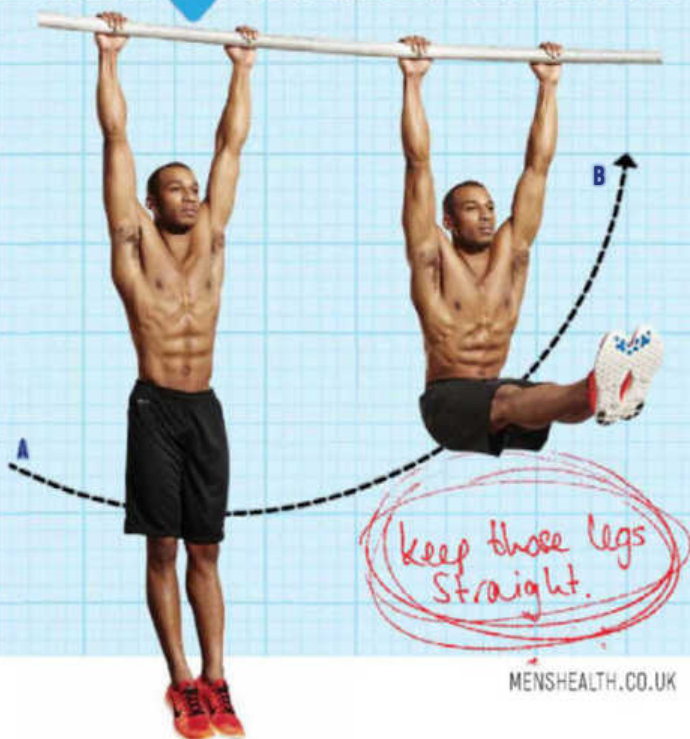


03 HANGING L-SIT RAISE

3 SETS OF 10 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

If those tuck kick-outs felt too easy, try raising your whole leg in one movement for an upgraded core workout. From a dead hang (A), exhale as you lift to 90 degrees, keeping your legs straight (B). As you do, pull your shoulders back to engage your lats. This will help you achieve and maintain that parallel position. Hold for a split second, then lower with control.



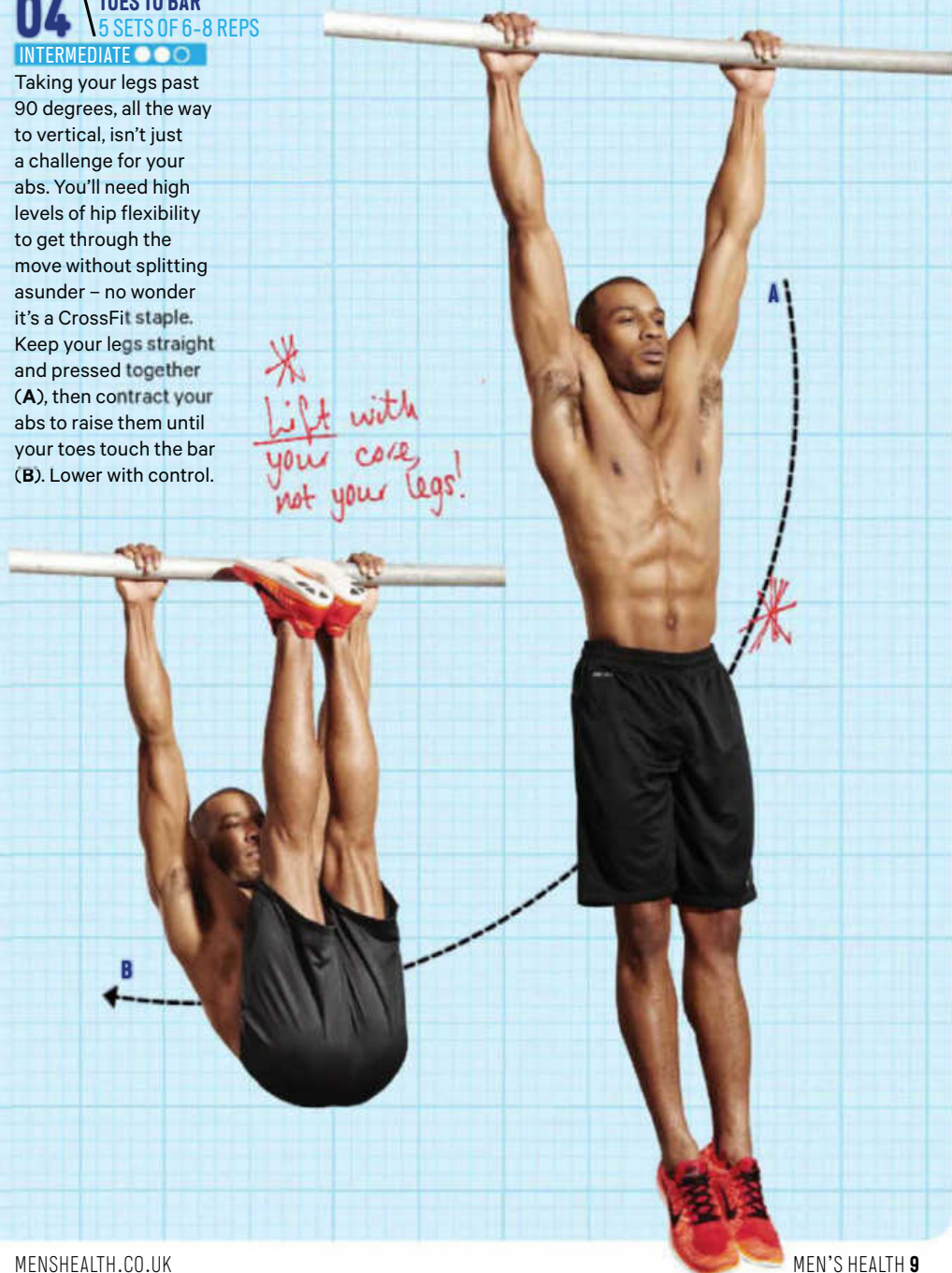
04 \ TOES TO BAR

5 SETS OF 6-8 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●●●

Taking your legs past 90 degrees, all the way to vertical, isn't just a challenge for your abs. You'll need high levels of hip flexibility to get through the move without splitting asunder – no wonder it's a CrossFit staple. Keep your legs straight and pressed together (A), then contract your abs to raise them until your toes touch the bar (B). Lower with control.

** Lift with your core, not your legs!*

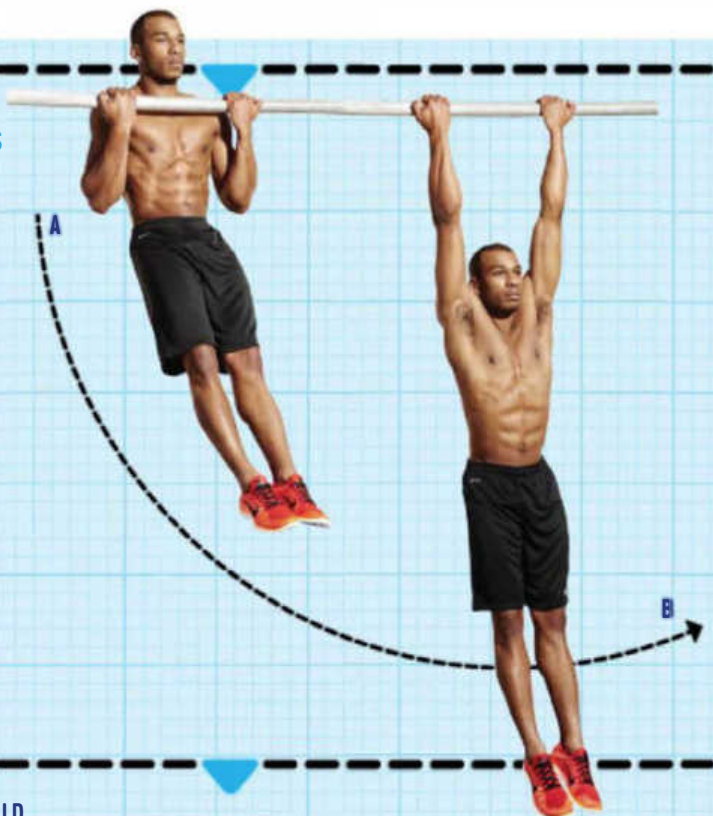


05 CHIN-UP

3 SETS OF 10 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Adopt a pronated grip (palms facing back), hands slightly narrower than shoulder width. Squeeze your biceps to lift your body up to the bar. When your chin is up and over (A), slowly lower to full extension (B). This grip engages your biceps more than a regular pull-up, so you should find these easier. Just make sure your form is perfect to reap the full benefit.

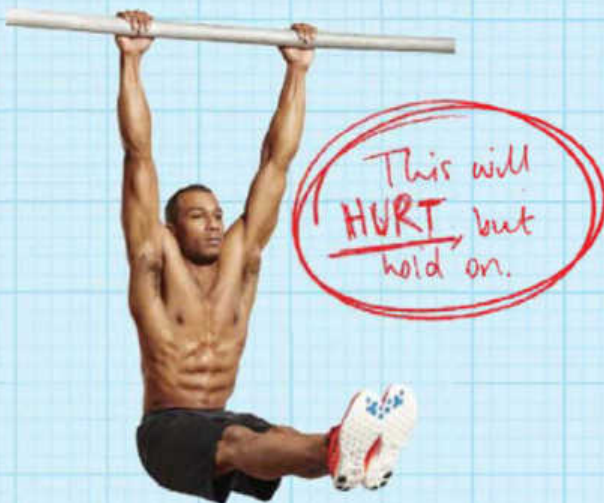


06 HANGING L-SIT HOLD

3 SETS OF 10 SEC

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Grip the bar with your hands at shoulder width and lift your feet. With your upper body still, hinge at the hips to raise your straight legs until they are parallel to the ground. Your hips, knees and ankles should be in line. Hold for 10 seconds. You'll need mobile hamstrings and solid grip strength to last much longer, so don't be hard on yourself.

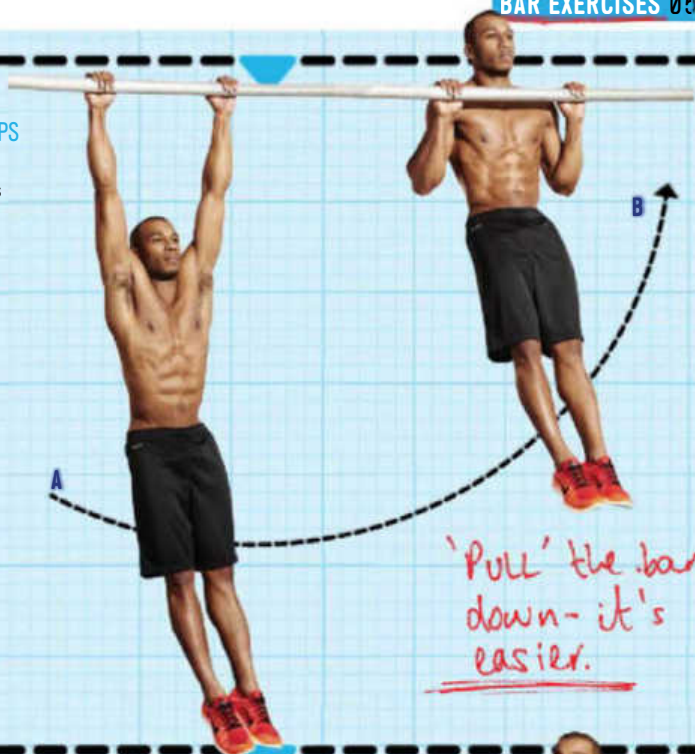


07 PULL-UP

3 SETS OF 8 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

The classic calisthenics move, pull-ups need to be a big part of your bodyweight regime. As well as strengthening your back and biceps, they also fire smaller muscles in your arms and shoulders. Take an overhand grip (A) and focus on pulling your elbows down and shoulders back (B). For maximum range of motion, lift the top of your chest over the bar.

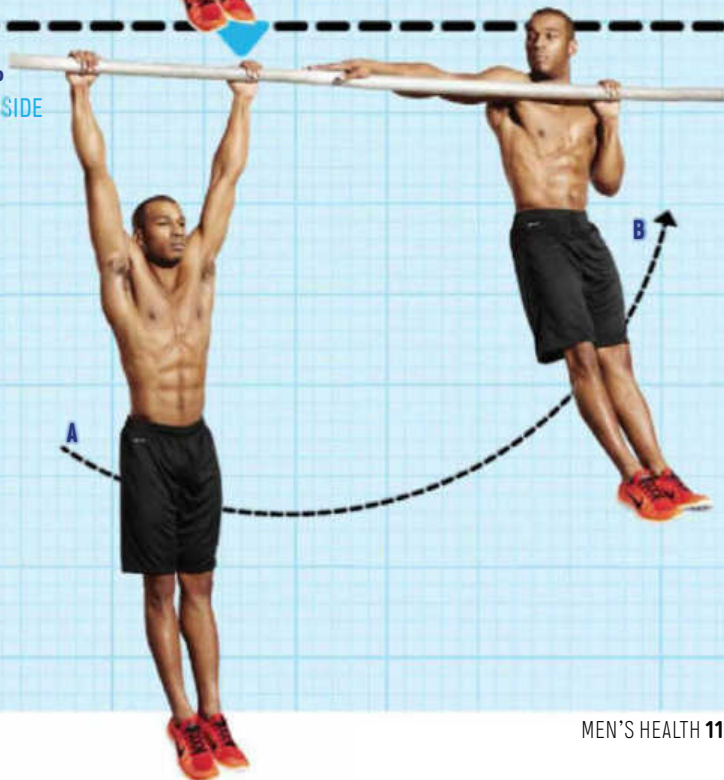


08 ARCHER PULL-UP

3 SETS OF 3 EACH SIDE

EXPERT ●●●●

This devilish variation will propel you toward a one-arm pull-up by hammering your lats to build a V-shape torso. Start in a standard pull-up position (A) before focusing on your left arm to pull up and across to the left (B); end with your left arm bent, right extended over the top of the bar. Lower back to the start before repeating to the right-hand side.



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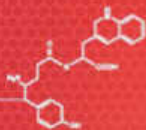
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09 | L-SIT TOES TO BAR

3 SETS OF 5 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

As with the regular toes to bar, keep your legs straight and raise to the top (B), but this time lower to 90 degrees (A). Without the brief but blissful respite of a dead hang, you're forced to alternate between abdominal contractions and holds, which will build the complete six-pack. Focus on pressing your toes to the bar at the top to keep your legs straight.

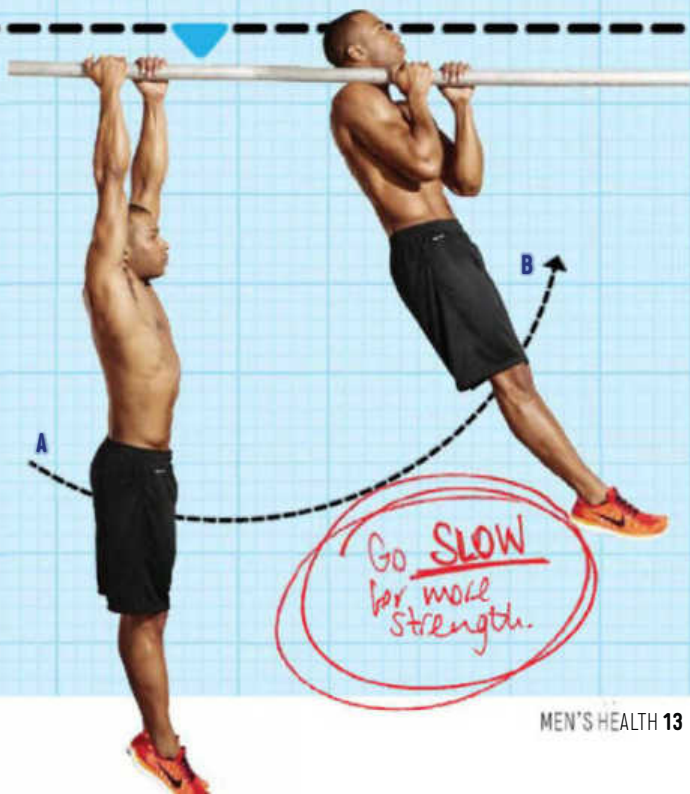


10 | COMMANDO PULL-UP

6 SETS OF 4 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

Front-facing pull-ups are great for adding size, but varying your exercise is the only way to develop total strength. With the bar straight overhead, use a close grip, as shown (A), to lift yourself. Squeeze your shoulder blades to engage your lats, moving your head to one side as you near the top (B). Tap your shoulder to the bar, lower and switch sides.

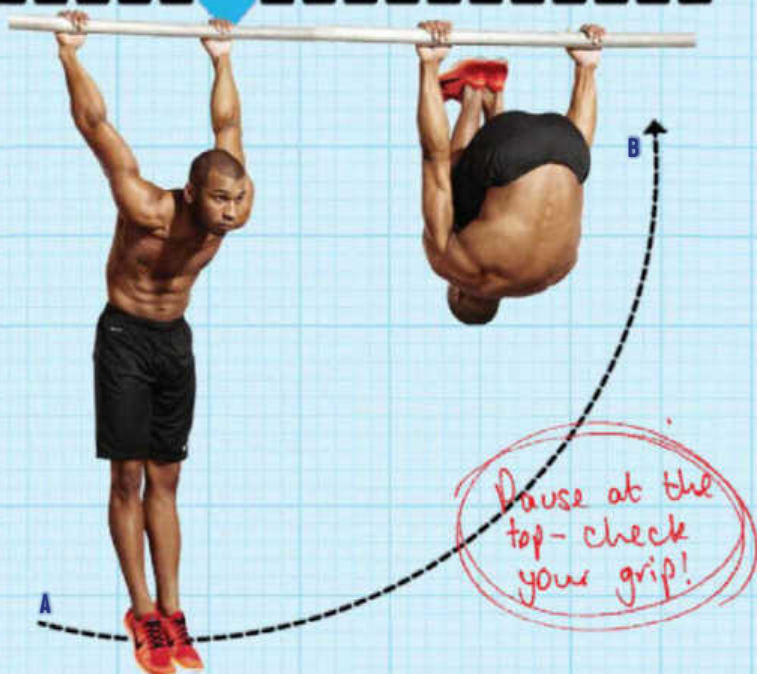


11 | SKIN THE CAT

3 SETS OF 1 REP

EXPERT ●●●

Perform a toes to bar, then pause at the top, squeezing your abs for stability. Now pull your knees in and rotate your hips so your legs pass under the bar, continuing all the way around (A). Go slowly to avoid injury – and to get the full conditioning benefit. Let go to relieve your burning shoulders. If you can reverse the movement to finish (B), consider yourself a pro.

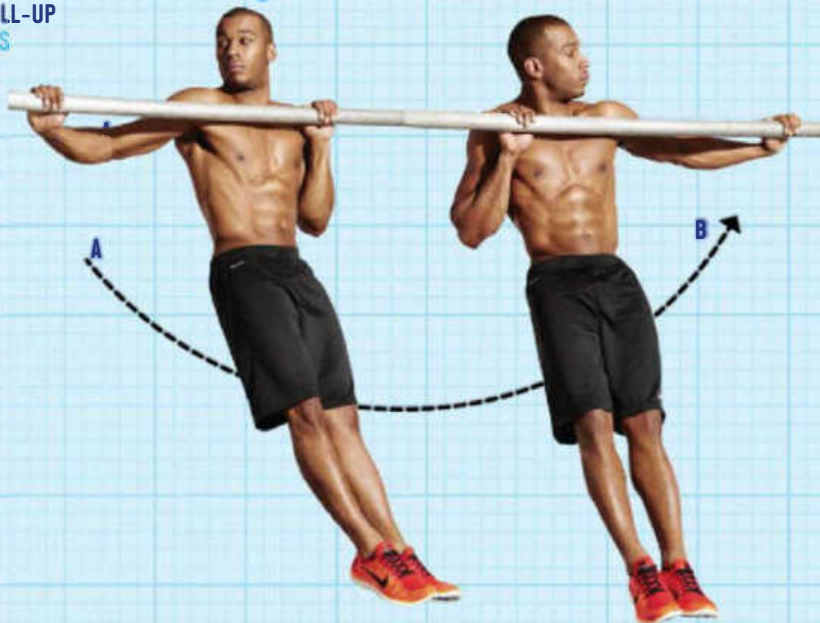


12 | TYPEWRITER PULL-UP

3 SETS OF 4 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

This will further stress your upper back and triceps. Hold the top position of the archer pull-up (A) before moving yourself from side to side (B). Hold your chin above the bar and engage your triceps to push your body across. Don't lose tension in your core – keeping it tight ensures a smoother movement. Well, maybe after the first few attempts.

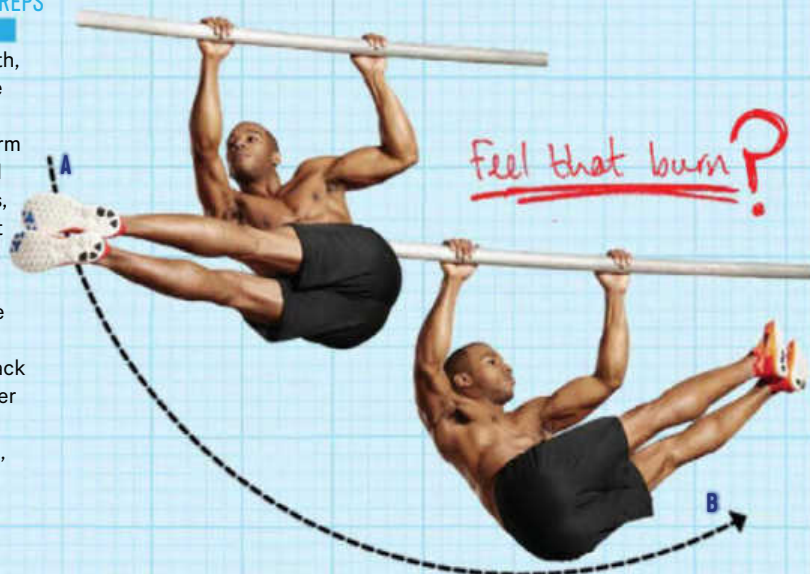


13 WINDSCREEN WIPER

4 SETS OF 6 REPS

EXPERT ●●●●

Take a shoulder-width, overhand grip on the bar and, from a dead hang position, perform a toes to bar. Instead of lowering your legs, turn them to the right and pull slightly up with your left arm so your legs twist to the side (A). Hold for a second then twist back to the middle and over to the left (B). If your obliques are burning, you're doing it right.

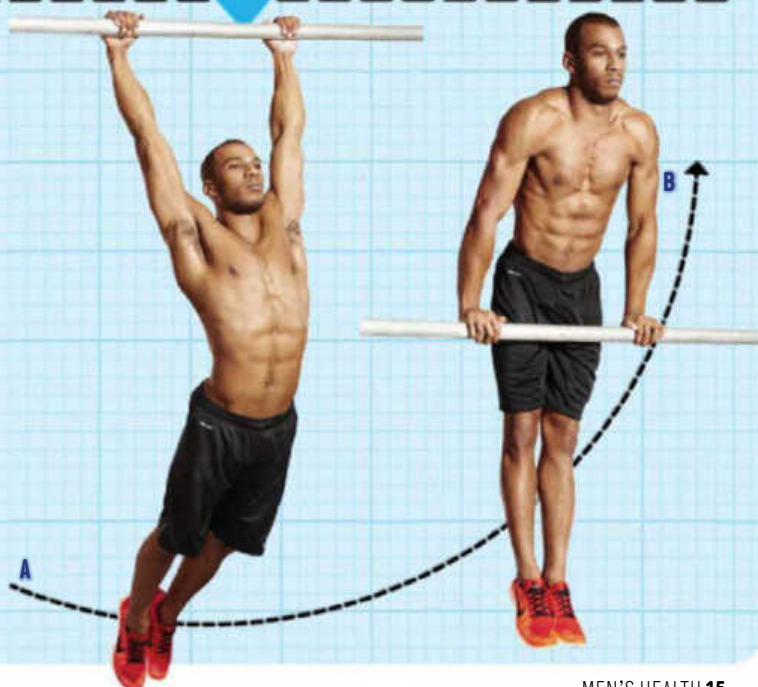


14 MUSCLE-UP

3 SETS OF 2 REPS

EXPERT ●●●●

Finally, combine your newfound pull-up strength with the core rigidity required for an effective hollow body hold. From a dead hang, tense your core and glutes then push your head through your shoulders (A), then swing back and pull up to the bar in one fluid move. Snap forward over the bar, pushing up with your triceps (B). Await the applause.



BAR PROGRESSION

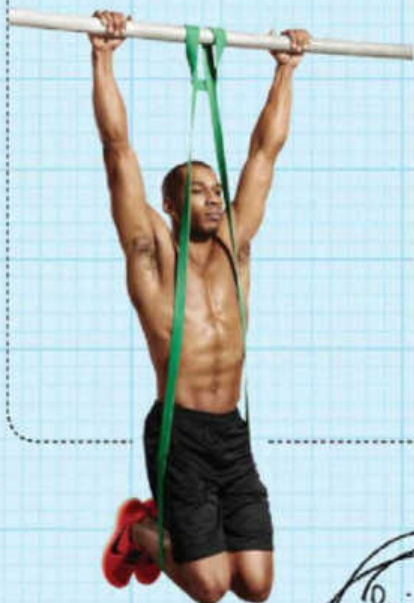
SET THE BAR HIGHER

If our final move is over your head, don't get down about it. Instead, use this circuit to build up from pull-up zero to muscle-up hero in a month's time. Add the next move once you've hit each rep target and you'll progressively gain the strength and skill you need for the big finish. Start pulling

START

01\ ASSISTED PULL-UP
BEGINNER ●●● > P8

Focus on perfect form until you can execute 3 sets of 12 without a break

02\ TOES TO BAR
INTERMEDIATE ●●●● > P9

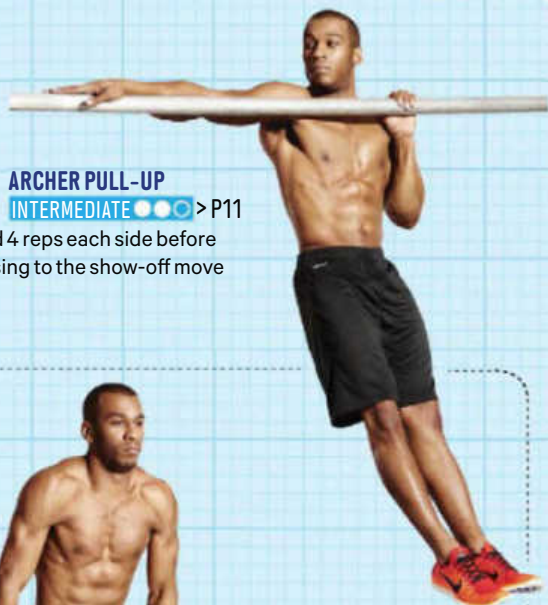
3 sets of 30 reps is your aim here. That done, progress to the pull-ups





03 \ PULL-UP INTERMEDIATE ●●●● > P11

You're after 10 solid reps in a row. Once you can do that, add move #4



04 \ ARCHER PULL-UP INTERMEDIATE ●●●● > P11

You need 4 reps each side before progressing to the show-off move



05 \ MUSCLE-UP EXPERT ●●●● > P15

Do 3 sets of max reps with as much rest as you need. You've earned it

Not bad, bro

END

OPEN THE PATH TO ELITE PERFORMANCE

A simple grip adjustment can pull those show-off moves within close reach

Muscle-ups may be the end game, but repping pull-ups ad nauseum won't get you there. You need to get smart with your practice. A closed grip (*right*) is great for regular



hanging exercises but to get over the bar, you need an open grip (*right*). Tucking your

thumb increases the fluidity of your movement pivoting around



the bar. This grip works to shorten the pulling phase, keeping the brakes off as you swing and snap forwards. Just make sure you apply chalk or use gloves; sweaty palms can be perilous.

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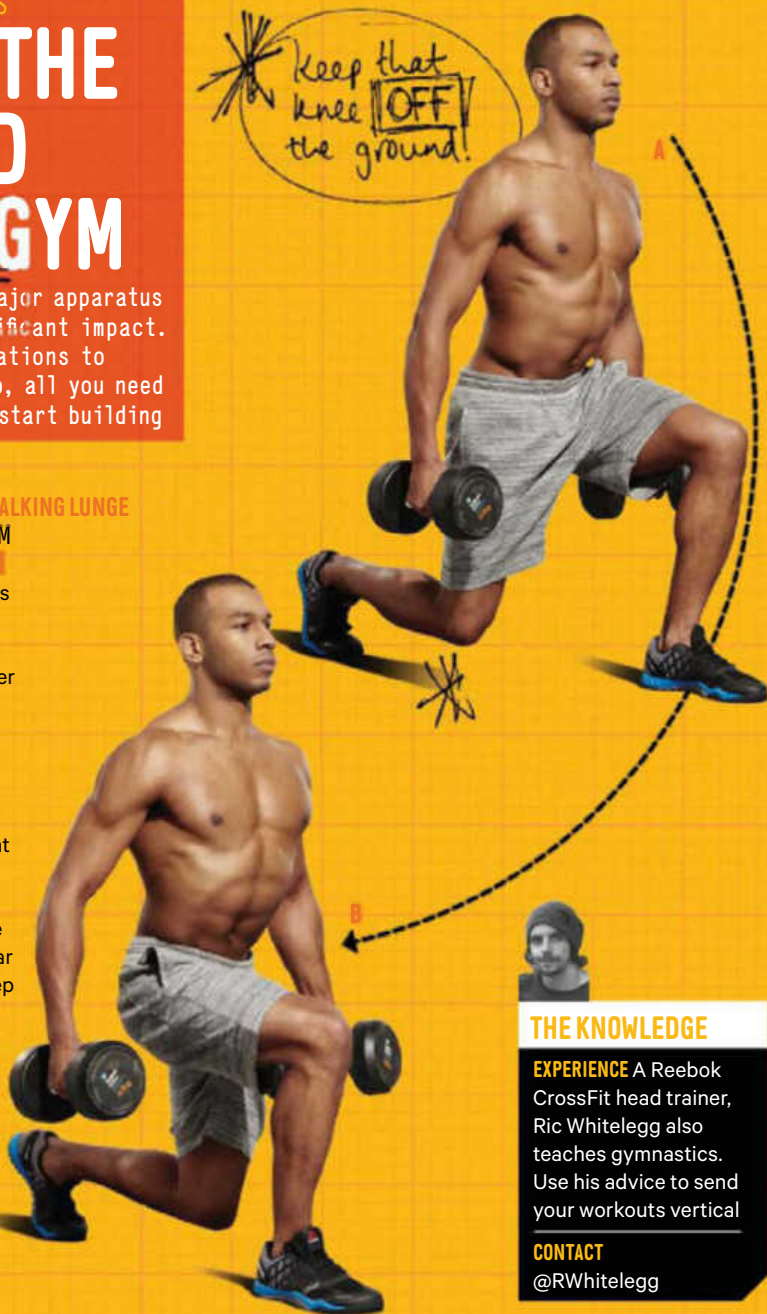
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01 DUMBBELL WALKING LUNGE

BEGINNER ●●●

We're heading towards handstands here so you're going to need strong quads. Consider this move a building block. Step forward and sink into a lunge, tensing your core to keep your torso straight (A). Your front leg should be bent at 90 degrees with your other knee just off the ground. Drive your rear leg forward as you step into the next rep (B) and repeat for 20m.



THE KNOWLEDGE

EXPERIENCE A Reebok CrossFit head trainer, Ric Whitelegg also teaches gymnastics. Use his advice to send your workouts vertical

CONTACT

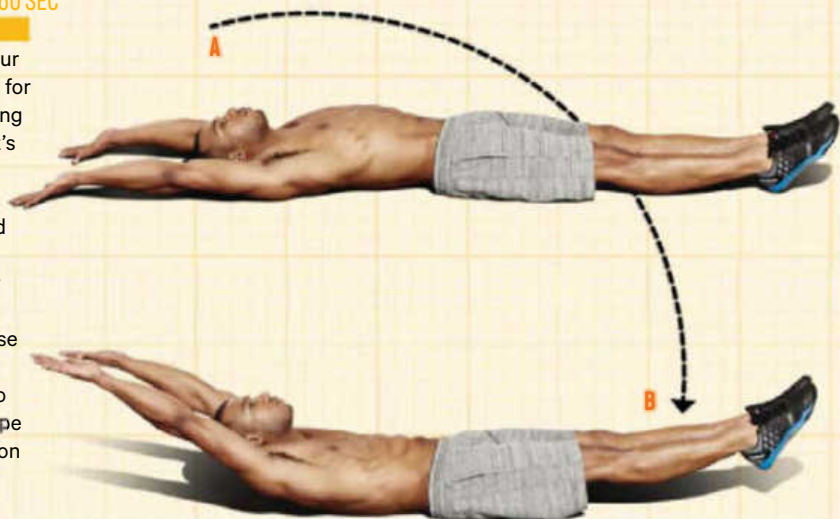
@RWhitelegg

02 \ HOLLOW BODY HOLD

5 SETS OF 60 SEC

BEGINNER ●○○○

Stable control of your core and legs is key for building up to walking on your hands. So it's time for a lie down. Start flat on your back, your arms and legs outstretched above you and your head raised off the floor (A). Slowly raise your limbs until just above the ground to form a concave shape (B); hold that position for one minute.

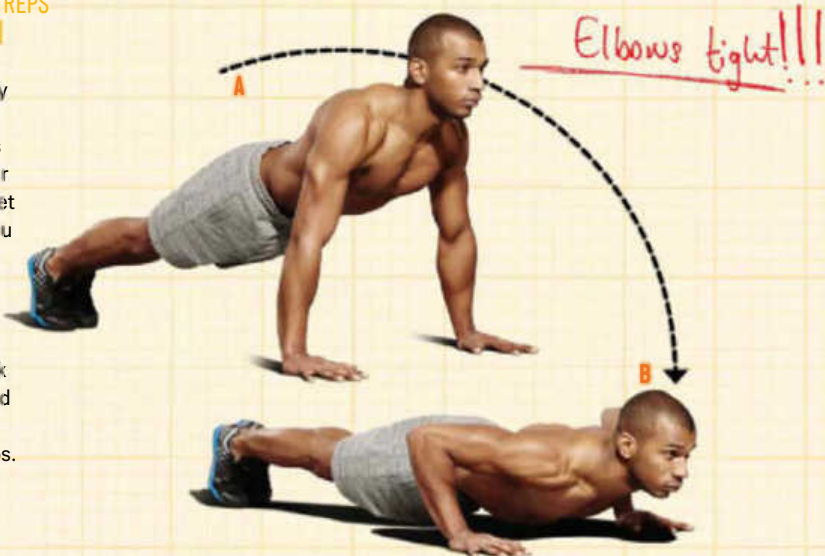


03 \ PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○○

Another basic move that will come in handy for gymnastic efforts. Begin with your hands on the floor below your shoulders and your feet straight out behind you (A). Lower your body to just off the ground, keeping your elbows tight to your sides (B). Press explosively back to the start. You should be able to build a nice rhythm after a few reps.

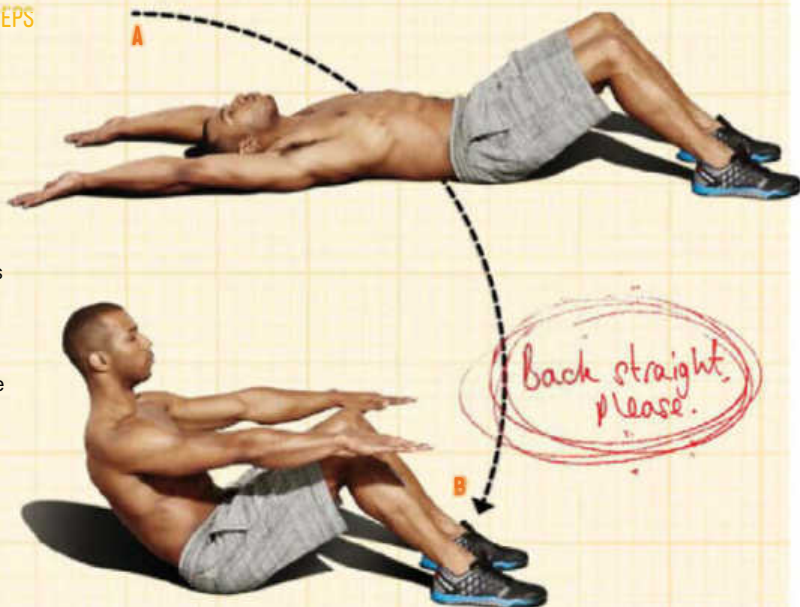


04 SIT-UP

3 SETS OF 12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

True, these aren't exactly new. But if you do them properly, they'll build the core strength needed to hold your body in any position. Lie on the ground with your knees bent, your arms over your head and hands on the ground (A). Contract your abs while tensing your glutes to sit up, reaching your arms forward (B). Swinging your arms is cheating.

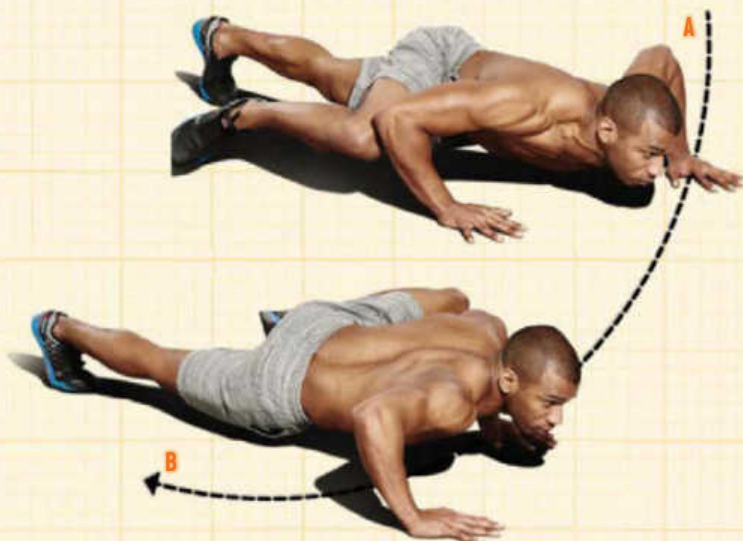


05 SPIDER-MAN CRAWL

3 SETS OF 20M

BEGINNER ●○○

You might get a few odd looks at the park, but this will fire your obliques to frame your abs. From a plank, step forward with your left hand and right foot, so your right knee meets the right elbow (A). Keep your eyes ahead and your core tense. Now step with your right hand and left foot, driving your left knee to your left elbow (B). Crawl like this for 20m.



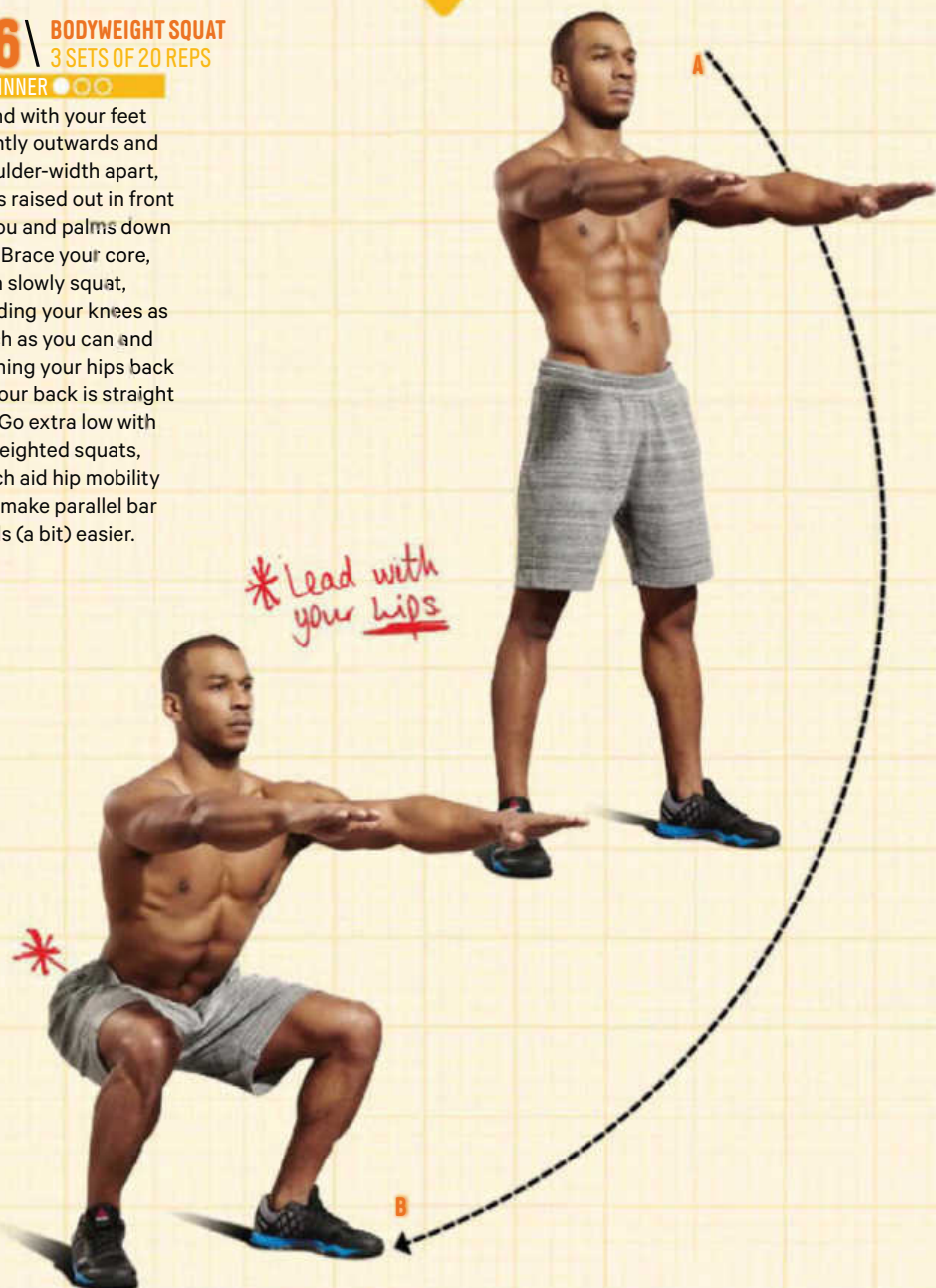
06 \ BODYWEIGHT SQUAT

3 SETS OF 20 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○○

Stand with your feet slightly outwards and shoulder-width apart, arms raised out in front of you and palms down (A). Brace your core, then slowly squat, bending your knees as much as you can and pushing your hips back so your back is straight (B). Go extra low with unweighted squats, which aid hip mobility and make parallel bar holds (a bit) easier.

** Lead with your hips*



07 \ HANDSTAND WALL WALK

3 SETS OF 6 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

For bulging shoulders and rock-hard abs, pay attention to form and take it slow. From a press-up position with your feet against a wall (A), step backward and walk your hands in, raising your feet above your head (B). Keep going until you're up in the handstand position, your chest facing the wall. Walk down slowly. Yes, we know this one hurts.



08 \ PYRAMID PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 12 REPS

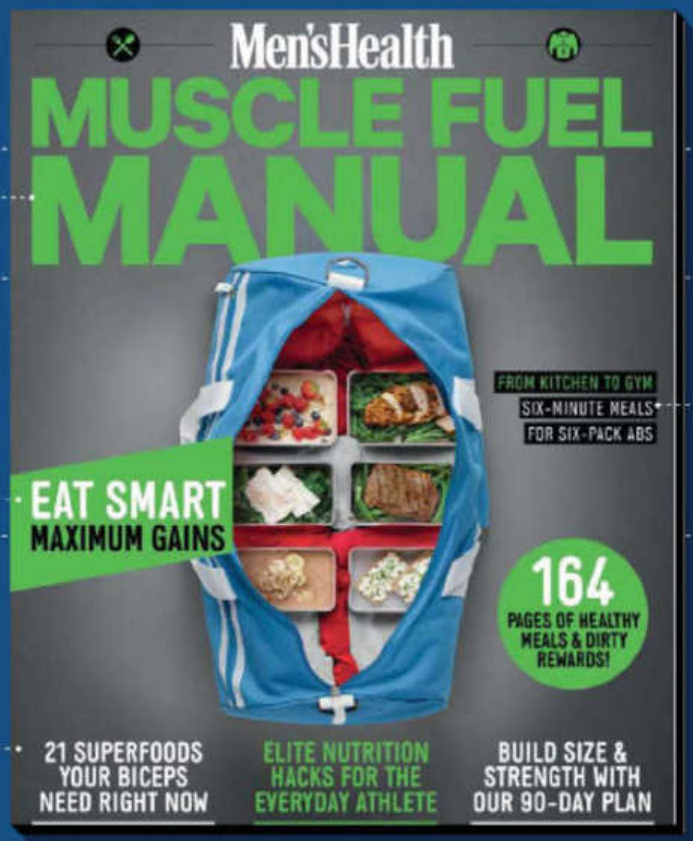
INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Start in a press-up, with your feet on a plyometric box. Brace your core and glutes to keep your hips in line with your shoulders. Now walk your hands toward the box until your hips are at 90 degrees and you're in a pike (A). Lower your head to the ground (B), then press back up to the top position. You're a step closer to taking your feet overhead.



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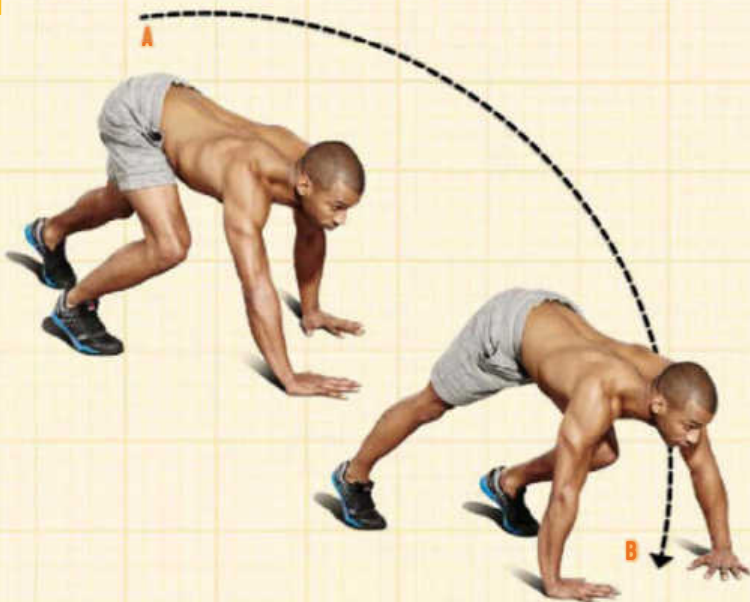
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09 \ HIGH-HIPS BEAR CRAWL

5 SETS OF 50M

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Walking with most of your weight on your shoulders is perfect practice for handstands. Start by placing your hands on the floor, while standing on your toes. Walk forward on all fours (A), pressing the ground away with your shoulders and keeping your hips high (B). Most of your weight should pass through your arms. This one's grizzly.

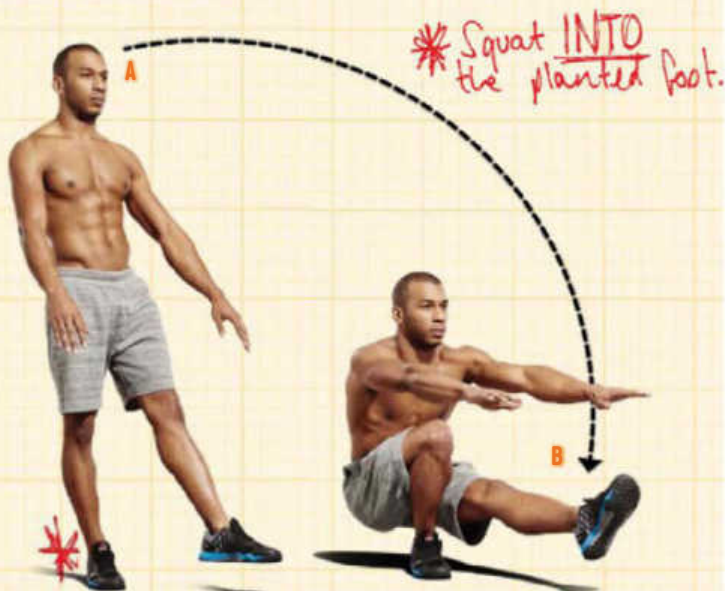


10 \ PISTOL SQUAT

3 SETS OF 8 REPS

EXPERT ●●●●

Coordinating the hold on one leg and squatting on the other requires mental agility as well as physical strength. Concentrate, basically. Stand with your feet in a narrow stance; as you squat down on one leg, raise the other (A) parallel with the floor, ending with your squatted leg as bent as possible (B). Stand up and change legs. Find a wall if your balance is off.

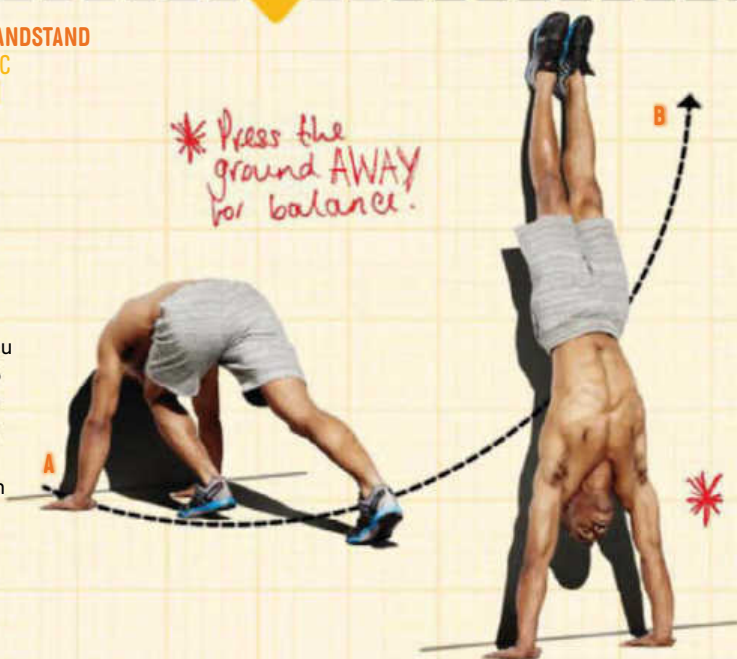


11 KICK-UP TO HANDSTAND

3 SETS OF 5 SEC

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

From the classic gymnast pose – stood upright, arms straight in the air – take a big lunge forward and reach for the ground a body's length ahead of you (A). Keep your back leg straight as you press with the other to drive it over your head into a vertical position (B), arms locked out throughout. We reckon there'll still be room for you at Rio.

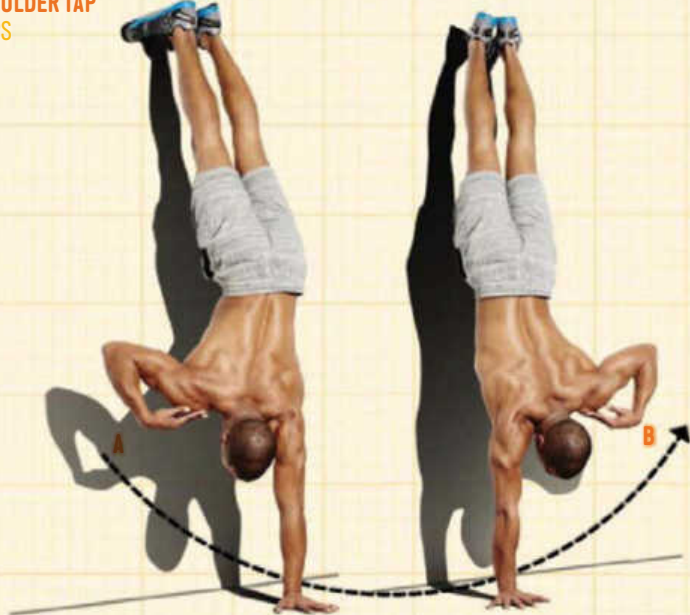


12 HANDSTAND SHOULDER TAP

3 SETS OF 20 REPS

EXPERT ●●●●

Time to hone a tricky calisthenics skill: transferring weight between your arms while upside down. Kick up to a handstand with your feet on a wall. Your body should be slightly curved, as per the Hollow Body Hold. Lift your right hand off the floor while keeping your left arm straight and tap your right shoulder (A). Replant it, then switch sides (B).

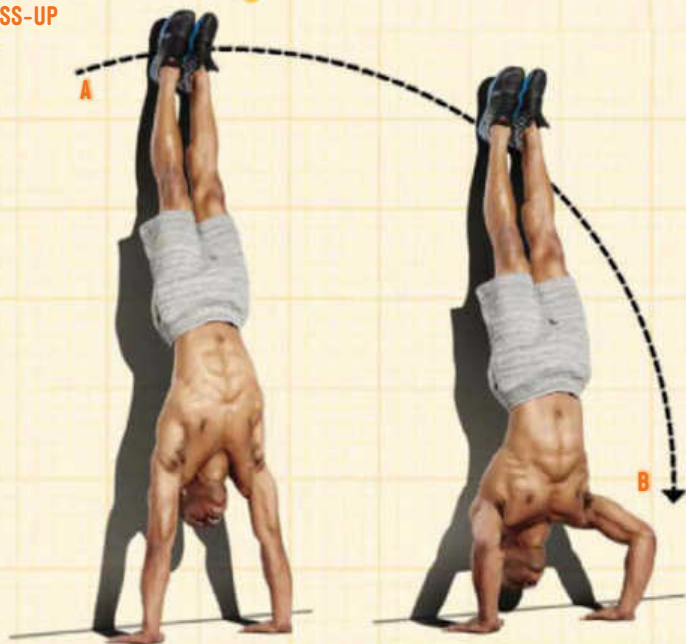


13 | HANDSTAND PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 8 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

Time to combine all the elements. Kick up to a handstand against the wall (A), tensing your posterior chain (lower back and glutes) to steady yourself. Keeping your eyes on the floor, slowly lower yourself down by drawing your shoulder blades together. As your head lightly brushes the ground (B), ignore your shaking shoulders and press back up to the top.

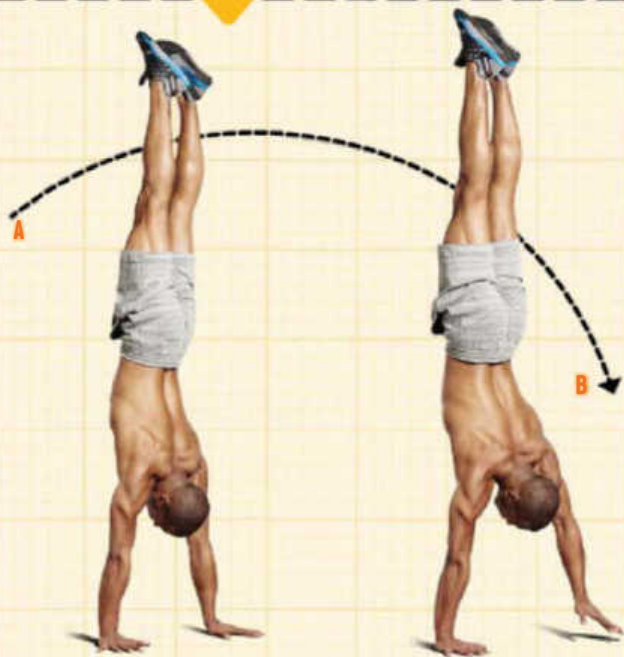


14 | HANDSTAND WALK

3 SETS OF 10M

EXPERT ●●●

The showstopper: kick up to a handstand and brace your lower abs to keep your back slightly arched, legs directly above your head. Now slowly walk forward with your hands, while controlling the weight transition from one arm (A) to the other (B). Tense your glutes to keep your legs steady. When you've done 10m, lower to the ground. Now check who saw.



FLOOR PROGRESSION

BE A HANDSTAND HERO

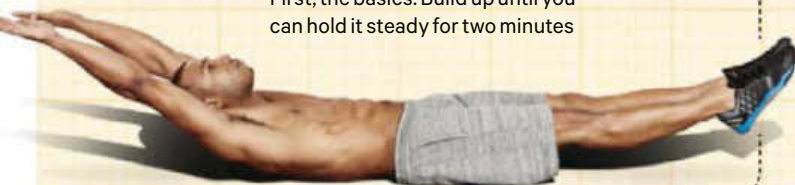
A rock-solid handstand walk is not such a lofty goal. This five-week workout programme arms you with the muscular stability and gymnastic strength you need to send your training vertical; just add each stage in order and take a day off between workouts. The result is a handstand circuit worth Instagramming. Get posting

START

01 \ HOLLOW BODY HOLD

BEGINNER ●●● > P20

First, the basics. Build up until you can hold it steady for two minutes



REMEMBER

Fingers pointing in!



02 \ HIGH-HIPS BEAR CRAWL

INTERMEDIATE ●●● > P25

Do 100m over 3 sets. Perfect form? You're ready to go upside down

03 \ KICK-UP TO HANDSTAND

INTERMEDIATE ●●● > P26

A 15-second handstand is your goal. Take two minutes' rest between tries

04 | HANDSTAND SHOULDER TAP

EXPERT ●●● > P26

Start with 3 sets of 5 reps on each side and build up to sets of 10



05 | HANDSTAND WALK

EXPERT ●●● > P27

Walk out, then reset and return, increasing distance gradually

END

MAINTAIN YOUR FORM UNDER FIRE

Kicking up to a handstand is a fine art, so don't jump into it blind

If you're attempting to hold a handstand for longer than a few wobbly seconds, perfecting the kick up is a crucial first step. Aim for the sweet spot. One foot should kick into the air first, with the other leg

following once you've gained enough forward momentum to transfer your weight to your (firmly planted) hands. Don't go at it with too much gusto: firing your legs hastily will overcook



the transition and is likely to send you cartwheeling. When your legs are above your head, press your fingertips into the ground hard to slow the momentum. Now all you have to do is stay there.

YOUR PERSONAL TRAINER ON THE MOVE

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BRINGING THE GYM TO YOU

MH's Active+ range of home fitness kit lets you hit every goal at any budget

01

SANDBAG from £34.99

This sandbag trainer has a comfortable and adjustable fitting, is made from durable material and will help you achieve a full body workout.



02

OLYMPIC WEIGHTS BENCH £149.99

This versatile folding bench includes detachable preacher curl and leg curl functions and can be used for seated shoulder presses. Weights sold separately.



03

GLOVES WITH WRIST STRAP £11.99

The ideal accessory for anyone needing comfort or extra grip when weight training, these adjustable gloves have an added wrist strap for support.



04

CABLE MACHINE £299.99

The ultimate piece of kit works your entire body. Comes with triceps rope, V handle, wide-grip pull-down bar and straight bar. Bench and weights sold separately.



05

AB WHEEL £24.99

With hand and foot straps, this piece of kit lets you perform unlimited exercises to work your core from every angle.



VISIT [ARGOS.CO.UK/MENSHEALTH](https://www.argos.co.uk/menshealth) TO SEE THE REST

PARALLETTE EXERCISES

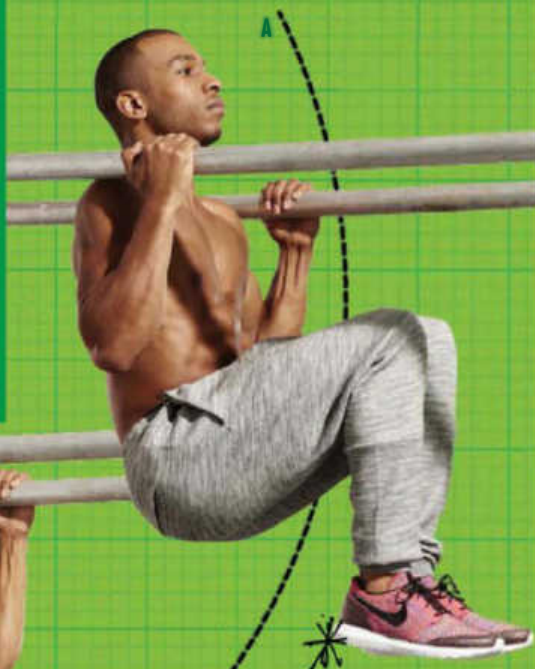
TAKE YOUR NEW BODY IN BOTH HANDS

Parallel bars are the most versatile piece of kit in your local park. This is how you can pull, lift, press and hold for a full-body workout, without having to queue at the gym

01 \ NEGATIVE HAMMER PULL 3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

Start between the bars, crouched on the balls of your feet. Take a neutral grip, pull your knees up to your chest and lift your body so your shoulders are just under the bars (A). Lower to full extension of the arms (B), then drop to the ground. Do this as slowly as you can to condition your upper body muscles to last under extended stress.



THE KNOWLEDGE

EXPERIENCE

Dip into top calisthenics athlete Stephen Hughes-Landers' advice and you'll become a bodyweight champ

CONTACT

calisthenicsuk.co.uk

**Press your heels
TOGETHER for a
core workout.*

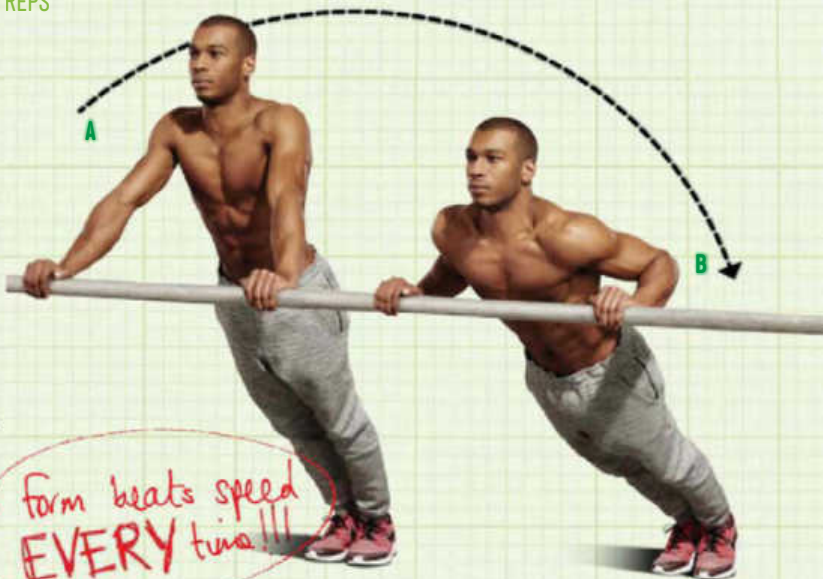
02 \ INCLINE PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○○

Continue your journey to total calisthenics control with your feet on the ground. Incline press-ups target your upper pecs but are also hard work for your triceps – vital for parallel bar exercises. Take hold of a single bar with your feet on the floor behind you, legs straight (A). Lower your chest to the bar, keeping your elbows tight to your body (B). Press back to the start.

Form beats speed
EVERY time!!!

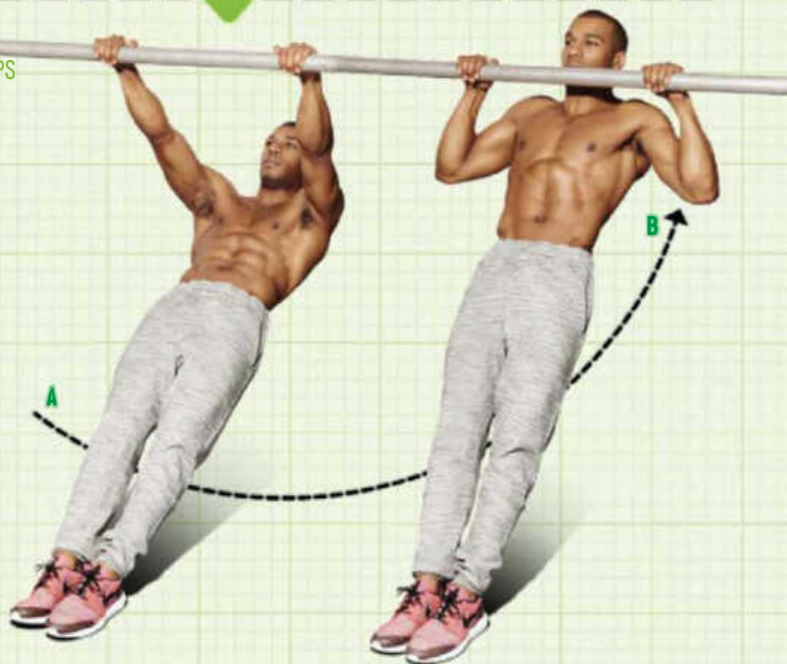


03 \ INVERTED ROW

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○○

Taking an overhand grip shoulder-width apart on one bar, walk underneath it, then hang prone at 45 degrees to the floor (A). Tense your glutes to remain rigid as you pull your chest up to the bar (B). Pause for a breath, then lower and repeat. Focus on squeezing your shoulder blades, which will ensure proper form as you progress.

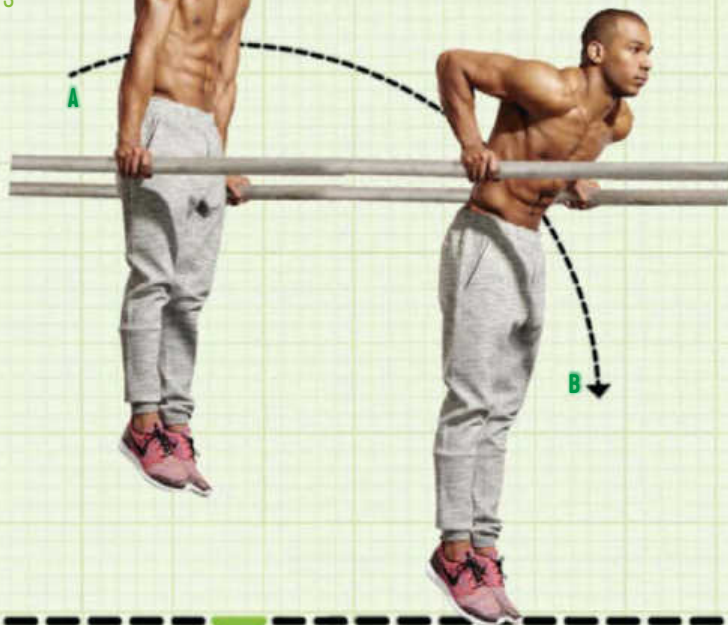


04 \ NEGATIVE DIP

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

Focusing on the eccentric (downward) phase of a dip will fire muscle fibres in your triceps for accelerated growth. Tense your core and glutes throughout to avoid swinging. Jump onto the bars and begin with one hand on each, your arms locked out and feet off the ground (A). Slowly lower by bending your arms to 90 degrees (B), then drop to the floor. Repeat.

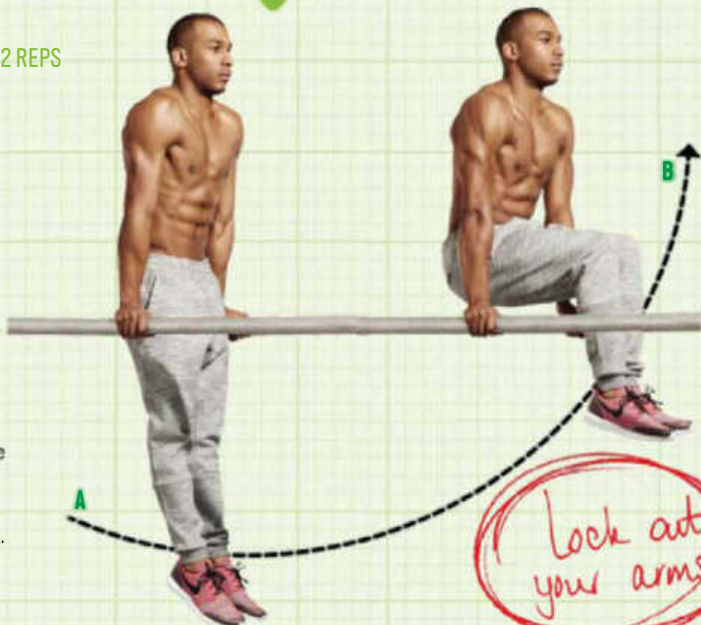


05 \ KNEE RAISE

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

BEGINNER ●○○

Begin in the starting position for a dip, with all your weight on fully extended arms (A). Slowly raise your knees up to your chest (B). It might make things easier, but don't be tempted to curve your spine – we're doing this the right way. Drawing in your belly button will activate your transverse abdominals, tightening your core for more advanced parallel holds.

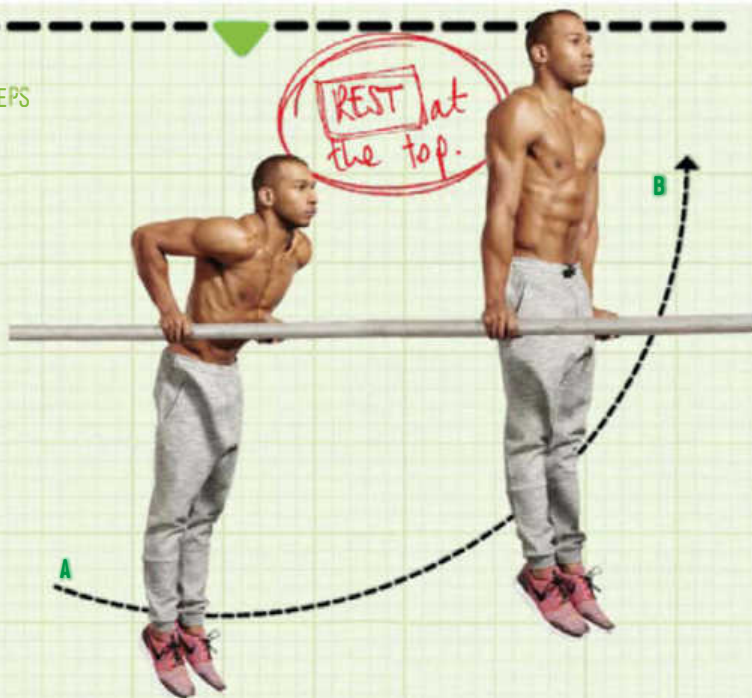


06 \ DIP

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Once you've got three sets of negative dips with 60-second rests down, it's time for a sterner test of your triceps. Take the negative dip starting position and lower so your arms are at 90 degrees (A). Press back up (B). In the concentric (upward) phase of the dip, you're lifting your bodyweight with your chest and arms – so you'll feel it tomorrow.

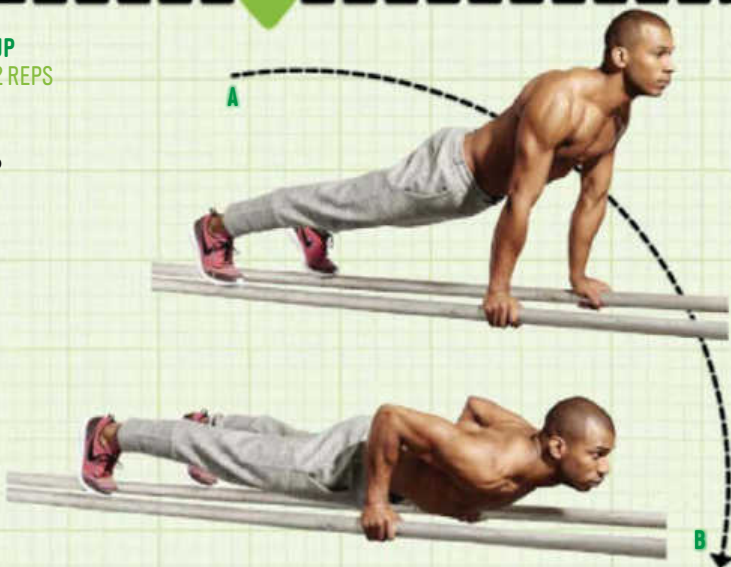


07 \ DEEP PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

Climb onto the bars to balance in a press-up position, as shown (A). Keeping your elbows close to your body, bend your arms to lower yourself down (B), continuing to sink until your chest has passed below your hands. Tense your glutes throughout for stability – going barefoot with this one will help you avoid an embarrassing (and nasty) tumble.

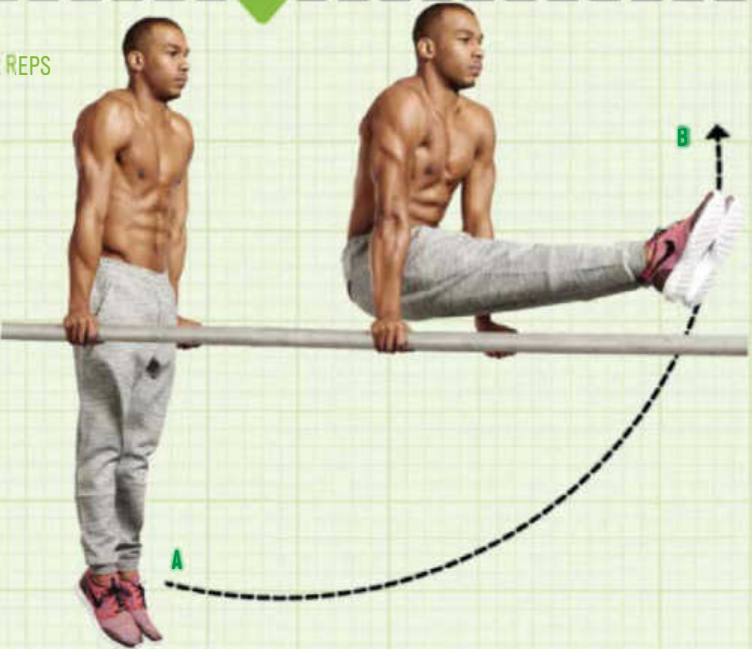


08 \ LEG RAISE

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

You're going to go through the same motions as the knee raise but with the whole leg. That added weight might not seem much but it will make things a lot harder, so contract your core to counter the challenge. Start on the bars with your arms fully extended (A). Raise your legs until your body forms a perfect L-shape (B). Try not to over-grimace.



09 \ L-SWING

3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS

INTERMEDIATE ●●●○

This requires a strong base, so keep your triceps tensed to build that platform. Begin in a dip position and raise your legs to just below 90 degrees (A). With a tight grip on the bars, swing your torso forward and hips back until your upper body is horizontal (B). Pause at the top by leaning forward for counter-balance, then lower with control.

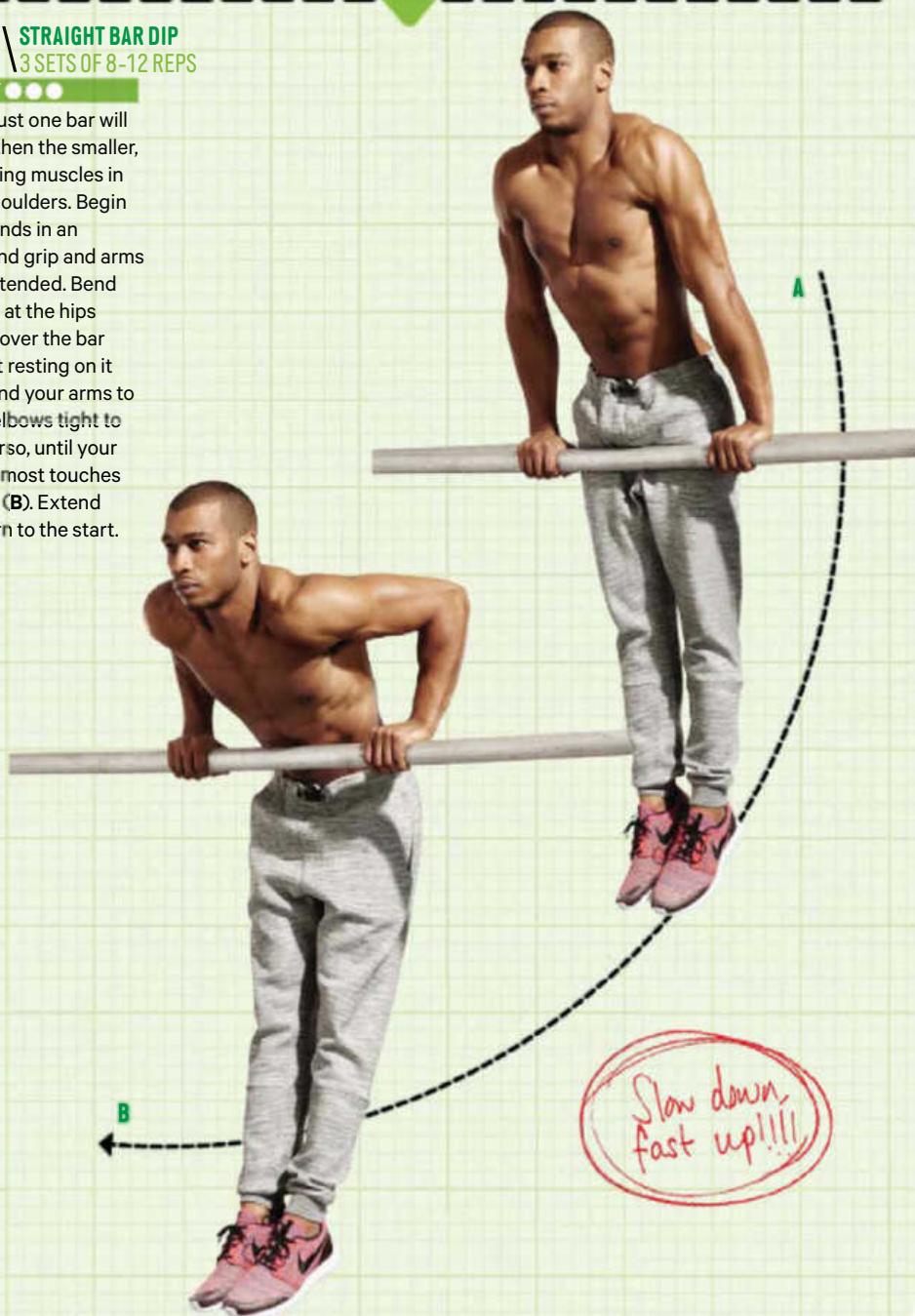


* HIPS HIGH !!!

10

STRAIGHT BAR DIP
3 SETS OF 8-12 REPS**EXPERT** ●●●

Using just one bar will strengthen the smaller, stabilising muscles in your shoulders. Begin with hands in an overhand grip and arms fully extended. Bend slightly at the hips to lean over the bar without resting on it (A). Bend your arms to lower, elbows tight to your torso, until your body almost touches the bar (B). Extend to return to the start.



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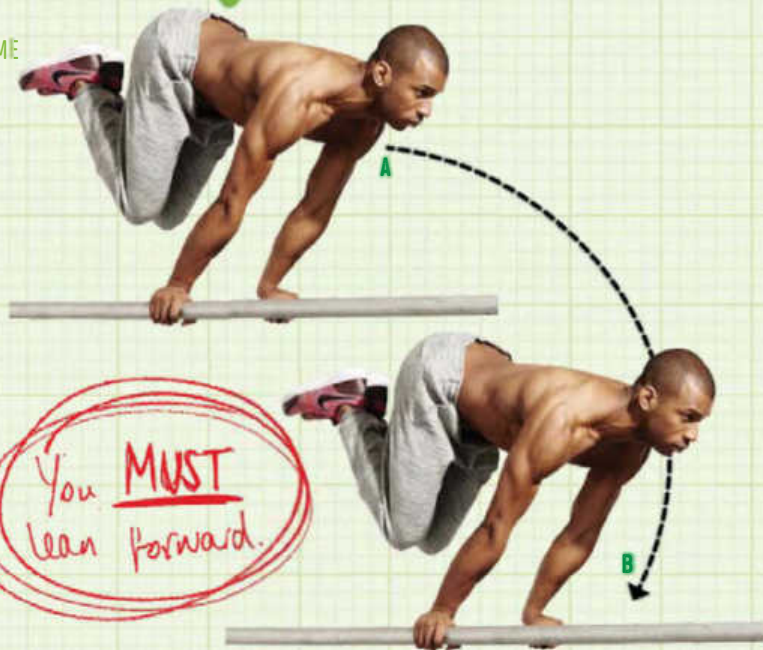
11 TUCK PLANCHE

3-5 REPS OF MAX TIME

EXPERT ●●●

Static moves like this load tension to your muscles, conditioning them to last under pressure. The longer you can hold it, the better prepared you'll be for advanced variations. Begin in the same way as an L-swing (A) but counter your body's weight by leaning forward, lifting your hips and tensing your core to hold it for as long as you can (B).

You MUST lean forward.

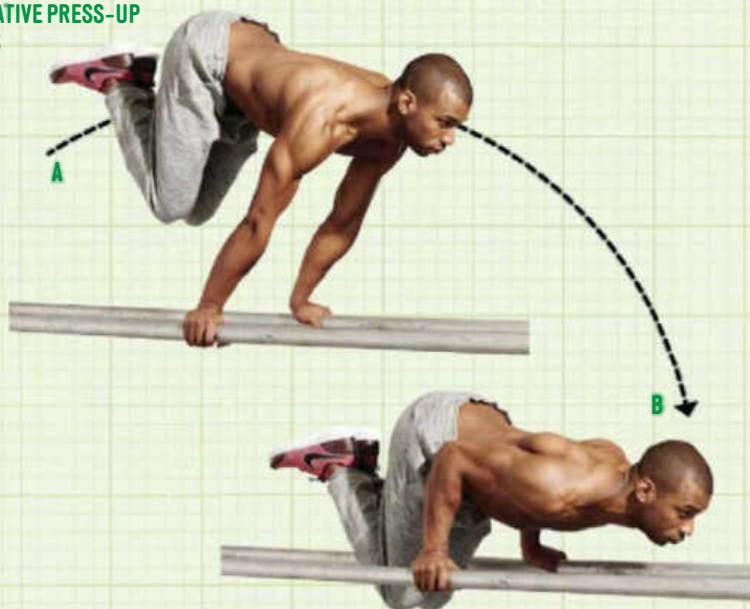


12 TUCK PLANCHE NEGATIVE PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 8-10 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

Once you can hold the tuck planche (A) for a solid 10 seconds, try lowering yourself down to the bars while maintaining the position (B). Keep the movement as slow and controlled as you can. Pressing down and holding a tuck planche is a tough ask. Focus on keeping your hips high and your back arched, rather than on the huge strain in your shoulders.

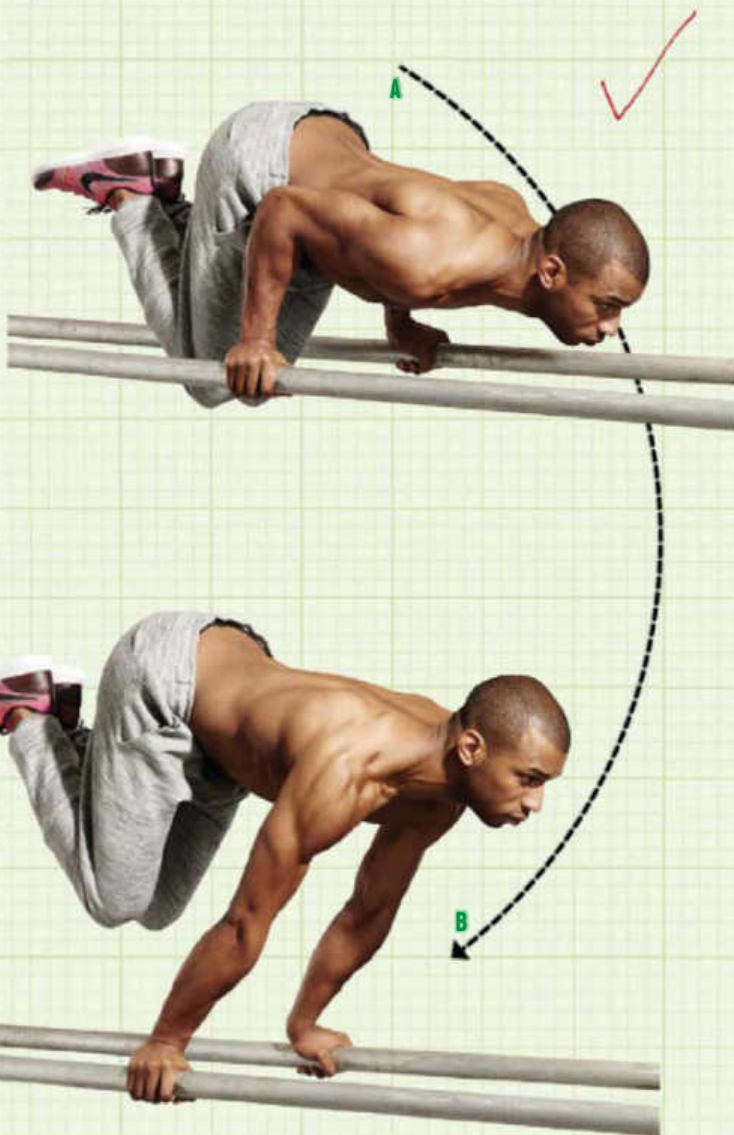


13 TUCK PLANCHE PRESS-UP

3 SETS OF 6-8 REPS

EXPERT ●●●

Pressing back up while keeping form demands expert control over your core, arms and shoulders. Fortunately, onlookers will be too busy Instagramming to see you shake. From a tuck planche, lower until your arms are at 90 degrees (A). Draw your shoulder blades apart and engage your triceps to press back to the top (B). Held form the whole way? We salute you, sir.



PARALLETTE PROGRESSION

GROW WITH THE STRAIN

That tuck planche press-up requires a heady mix of core strength and upper-body control. Build up your body in balance with our six-stage plan, adding a new move when you can nail the previous for a muscle-building workout without parallel

START

01 \ NEGATIVE HAMMER PULL
BEGINNER ●●● > P33

Once you can do 3 sets of 15 reps with 90 seconds rest, add move #2



GO **SLOWLY!!!**

03 \ L-SWING
INTERMEDIATE ●●● > P37

A single set of 20 consecutive reps is your target. Don't cheat yourself

02 \ KNEE RAISE
BEGINNER ●●● > P35

Now you need to perform 30 reps over 3 sets before you progress





04 | TUCK PLANCHE

EXPERT ●●● > P40

This is all a matter of time under tension. A solid hold of 10 seconds is the goal



05 | TUCK PLANCHE NEGATIVE PRESS-UP

EXPERT ●●● > P40

With the hold mastered, do 10 reps of negatives over 3 sets. Rest as much as you need



06 | TUCK PLANCHE PRESS-UP

EXPERT ●●● > P41

Try for 3 sets of maximum reps. If it's 3 single reps, we're still impressed

END

EXCELLENT Work!

ACHIEVE THE INSIDE EDGE

Forgoing the local park can tap into extra homegrown strength

While parallel bars provide you with more room and a greater range of motion, parallettes are what you need for at-home progression exercises. Taking your planche down to ground level will help perfect that first

tuck planche. Instead of swinging up and then attempting to hold the tuck, simply begin with your feet on the ground and steadily raise your body off upward by a few inches. You are



in a better position to make small adjustments to form without the fear of taking a tumble. Which means you can practise at home before returning to the park to really show off.

FIRST GEAR

BODYWEIGHT EQUIPMENT

Admittedly, you don't need any kit for calisthenics – other than to protect your modesty. But if you're starting out, these extras will rev up your progression and make those show-off moves more achievable

ENHANCE YOUR RANGE OF MOTION

These shorts, made from Nike's Dri-Fit fabric, not only efficiently wick moisture from your skin but also feature ergonomic seams to increase your range of motion. Perfect for tricky straddle holds.

Nike Dri-Fit Touch Fleece
£38 very.co.uk



AMPLIFY YOUR TRAINING

Regular headphones aren't cut out for big bodyweight moves, so invest in wireless support. The Beats Pill+ speaker is small enough to be portable and connects to your phone or tablet via Bluetooth. Perfect for group training sessions.

Beats Pill+ £189
uk.beatsbydre.com



LEND YOUR GAINS A STRONG HAND

Muscle-ups, dips and handstands: all your power goes straight through your wrists. The 'Power Strap' on these Flux Half-Finger training gloves provides firm support, while the palm padding improves your grip. Which is handy.

Under Armour Gloves
£20 underarmour.co.uk





Ab Rollouts assist with EVERY move.

DON'T SHUN THE SUPPORT ACT

Assisted efforts are the only way to build up to the iconic moves, and these resistance bands will give you the leg up you need. Plus, they're great for stretching muscles in your cool-down – yes, you do have to bother with that.

Men's Health Resistance Bands Set £30 argos.co.uk

BE A STRANGER TO FRICTION

If the mere thought of big compound movements makes your skin itch, invest in a comfortable lightweight T-shirt. The seamless construction on this New Balance M4M short-sleeve T will ensure your workouts don't chafe.

New Balance T-shirt £45 newbalance.co.uk

ROLL DOWN TO THE CORE

Two wheels rather than the usual one means you can more acutely target your obliques for complete core definition. Whether you're tucking a planche or walking on your hands, ridged abs will stand you in very good stead.

Elite Sportz Equipment Ab Wheel £25 amazon.co.uk

NOW JOIN RANKS WITH THE ELITE...

As a former Reebok CrossFit Games Champion, Sam Briggs knows a thing or two about bodyweight mastery. Heed her advice, then get to work

SET YOUR SIGHTS HIGH



It's no coincidence we've given you three show-off moves to aspire to. "Setting a goal means you can focus your training," says Briggs. Once you get going, that muscle-up is well within reach.



REST EASY

Reckon you're getting enough sleep? Think again. "An average guy's lifestyle – juggling work and family commitments – doesn't allow time for effective recovery," says Briggs. If you're training every day, six hours' kip won't cut it – you need at least eight. Sleep well, gents. Tomorrow is another day to train.



GET STACKED

Not only will your new exercise regime rattle your muscles, it can also burn through your immune defences faster than a sneeze. Call in expert reinforcements in the shape of supps. Try Briggs' stack for size – protein, glucosamine, vit D, magnesium and fish oils – to avoid a prolonged absence from the park.

GROUP PRIDE



Training with a partner is a must; having someone push you will speed up your progress. A University of Oxford study showed that training with a friend can reduce the pain of each rep by causing a rush of endorphins. "It's always better to share the journey and support each other at every stage," says Briggs.



LAY THE GROUNDWORK

"If you get the basics wrong, everything else is harder," says Briggs. "Focus on mobility and technique before doing anything serious." So, nail assisted pull-ups and negative dips before you lift yourself on the bars. This guards against injury too. We're looking at you, champ.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Shaun Stafford'.

Shaun Stafford
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